

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 8, 2004. Claims 1 to 7 and 9 to 15 are in the application, with Claim 1 being independent. Claim 8 has been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 6, and 9 have been amended herein. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. The rejection is respectfully traversed, and is submitted to have been obviated by the amendment of Claim 6.

Claim 12 was objected to for an alleged informality. The Office Action states that it is unclear whether Applicants intended to treat this claim as an independent claim or a dependent claim. This statement is respectfully traversed.

Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 12 is in proper dependent form and is manifestly in compliance with 35 U.S.C. § 112, second and fourth paragraphs. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully solicited.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 8 and 9.

Claims 1 to 7 and 10 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,620,530 (Nakayama). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to contain the allowable subject matter of Claim 8. Accordingly, Claim 1 is believed to be in condition for allowance.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from the independent

claim discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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